



CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW AND CONSUMER AWARENESS AMONG RURAL CONSUMERS IN THE GANDHINAGAR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to look into rural consumer protection awareness and the lack of consumer protection awareness in rural areas in the Gandhinagar district. To test the veracity of this broad statement about consumer protection awareness that is frequently stated in day-to-day operations. Consumer protection law arose from and is still an element of consumerism. This study aimed to determine the amount of consumer protection awareness among rural consumers, as well as the level of awareness of consumer protection technology among rural customers and the sources of information for building consumer protection awareness.

KEYWORDS: Consumer, Consumer Protection, Consumer Awareness, Consumer law.

INTRODUCTION:

India is one of the world's largest rural consumer marketplaces. The Indian market has seen various changes as a result of globalisation, liberalisation, and privatisation, with a large-scale entry of international companies being one of the most significant effects of the new economic order. Consumers are vital values of man, they are not dependent on producer or seller, the producer and seller are only dependent on a consumer, the consumer is the boss of business, and the producer or business man is the consumer's server, according to references from various published research articles on consumer protection awareness among rural consumers. The majority of consumers nowadays watch television, listen to the radio, and read newspapers and periodicals. Even though many programmes entice viewers to television, many advertisements occur on radio, newspapers, and magazines in this programme. They are sometimes misunderstood, and they are burdened with the challenge of selecting a product because there are other products with similar utility but less information.

We rarely have appropriate understanding of a product's quality and safety when we purchase it. We're quite concerned about being duped. This is when consumer protection becomes necessary. Consumer protection has become a topic of growing public concern in recent years, since unethical business practises have a negative impact on the nation's well-being by contributing to social unrest and giving consumers excessive financial hardship.

The consumer is the person who pays for the products and services that are produced. As a result, consumers play a critical role in a country's economic structure. Producers would lack a key reason to produce, which is to sell to consumers, if there was no effective demand. Consumer trust in manufacturers boosts economic activity, but the consumer must have reasonable grounds for trust. Consumers will respect not just the quality and safety of the product, but also the assurance of the quality and safety of the product. As a result, assurance is necessary for confidence. Producers benefit from offering certainty, therefore they strive to establish, expand, and display a positive image. Advertisements, displays, sales assistance, labelling and packaging, among other things, are used by producers to exhibit quality and safety, as well as to make the content of promises apparent and publicly known. When there is a loss of trust or an unreasonable risk, however, the consumer's trust is shattered.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

1. To know the consumer protection law awareness level among the rural consumers.
2. To study the awareness level of consumer protection law among the rural consumers.

CONSUMER AWARENESS:

Consumer awareness refers to the following:

- Consumers' understanding of the quality of the thing they have purchased. For example, the consumer should be aware of whether the product is safe for health, whether it poses an environmental threat, and so on.
- Education about the numerous sorts of hazards and difficulties related with product marketing - For example, one method of product marketing is advertisement in newspapers, television, and other media. Consumers should be properly informed about the negative effects of advertising. They must also check the advertisement's content.

- The understanding of consumer rights' - This means that the consumer must first understand that he or she has the right to receive the appropriate product. Second, if the product is proven to be defective in some way, the consumer should be aware of his or her rights to compensation under the legislation of the land.
- Consumers should be aware of their own obligations, which means they should avoid wasteful and unneeded consumption.

CONSUMER RIGHTS:

The purchase of goods and services entitles the consumer to certain rights which are as follows:

- 1) **Right to Safety:** A consumer has a right to be protected from goods and services that endanger his health, life, or property.

For example, counterfeit and inferior pharmaceuticals; low-quality raw-material equipment such as iron and pressure cookers; and low-quality food goods such as bread, milk, jam, butter, and so on. Consumers have a right to be protected from losses caused by such products.
- 2) **Right to be informed:** A customer has the right to get all of the information on which he or she bases his or her decision to purchase products or services. This information could be about the commodity's quality, purity, potency, standard, date of manufacture, mode of usage, and so on. As a result, a manufacturer must offer all of this information in a timely manner to ensure that the consumer is not duped.
- 3) **Right to choose:** A customer has the unrestricted right to purchase any goods or services he desires from the various commodities and services accessible on the market. In other words, no seller can exert undue influence over his decision. Any seller who does so will be considered to be interfering with his right to choose.
- 4) **Right to be heard:** A customer has a right to have his or her complaint heard. This right also allows consumers to express their dissatisfaction with defective products and the wrongdoing producer/company/seller without fear of retaliation.
- 5) **Right to seek redressal:** This privilege compensates customers who have been victimised by a seller's unethical business practises. For example, if the quantity and quality of the product do not meet the seller's expectations, the buyer is entitled to reimbursement. The consumer has several options for compensation, including free product repair, product return with a refund, and product substitution by the seller.
- 6) **Right to consumer education:** It entails having access to tools and information that assist consumers in making better purchasing decisions both before and after they make a purchase. Government ministries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) give consumer instructions and guidelines.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

500 around consumers from rural area of Gandhinagar district has been approached for this study

DATA ANALYSIS:

PARAMETERS	YES	NO
Do you examine the expiry date of the items you buy?	190	310
Do you check the MRP (Maximum Retail Price) before buying a product?	380	120
Are you charged the MRP or more than/less than the MRP?	380	120
Do you check the weight of the products mentioned on the items?	90	410
Have you ever complain for adulteration or duplication items?	110	390
Are you aware of your rights as consumers?	320	180
If you are not satisfied with the price/quality of the products do you realize the need for forming some consumer clubs to fight for your rights?	235	265
Are you ready to join such forums for the redressal of your grievance?	290	210
Are you aware of consumer courts for redressal of grievances of the consumers?	310	190
Have you ever filled a case in the consumer court?	70	430
Do you think media can play an important role in increasing consumer awareness?	450	50

INTERPRETATION:

From the above table it can be concluded that 38% of the respondents examine the expiry date of the items they buy while 62% of the respondents don't examine the expiry date of the items they buy. 76% of the respondents check MRP (Maximum Retail Price) before buying a product while 24% of the respondents check MRP (Maximum Retail Price) before buying a product. 76% of the respondents believed that they are charged the MRP or more than/less than the MRP while 24% of the respondents believed that they are charged the MRP or more than/less than the MRP. 18% of the respondents check the weight of the products mentioned on the items while 82% of the respondents don't check the weight of the products mentioned on the items. 22% of the respondents complained for adulteration or duplication items where 78% of the respondents didn't do complain for adulteration or duplication items. 64% of the respondents are aware about their rights as consumers where as 36% of the respondents are not aware about their rights as consumers. 47% of the respondents realize the need for forming some consumer clubs to fight for their rights when they are not satisfied with the price/quality of the products, 53% of the respondents don't realize the need for forming some consumer clubs to fight for their rights when they are not satisfied with the price/quality of the products. 58% of the respondents are ready to join such forums for the redressal of their grievance where as 42% of the respondents are not ready to join such forums for the redressal of their grievance. 62% of the respondents are aware of consumer courts for redressal of grievances of the consumers, 38% of the respondents are aware of consumer courts for redressal of grievances of the consumers. 14% of the respondents have filled a case in the consumer court where as 86% of the respondents have filled a case in the consumer court. 14% of the respondents have filled a case in the consumer court where as 86% of the respondents have filled a case in the consumer court.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of consumer protection awareness among rural consumers. The research total has been designed in order to study the research objective. For this study, a schedule was used as a research tool. On the basis of multi stage random sampling techniques, it was surveyed among 500 rural respondents from Ahmedabad district. The information gathered is coded and analysed using statistical software. The data revealed the extent to which consumers are unaware of key facts that are critical to their personal well-being. The heights and responsibilities of rural responses are lacking. They need to be educated and trained for their own good.

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